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The Processional

A Paean by

GEORGE GORDON



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THE PROCESSIONAL A PAEON

BY

GEORGE GORDON



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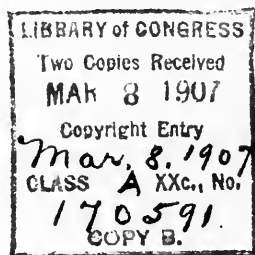
RICHARD G. BADGER

The Gorham Press

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Ye who now face the battling throngs
With Courage of your Right,
Who spurn mere gold for lowlier songs,
Riches, for keener sight:

Ye who still trust that Primal Sign
Our long lost Fathers saw;
Arise, demand your right of line,
Voiced through the Common Law!

Sons of the East, aliens through birth and blood,
Yet brothers one in basal servitude
With us who feel the chain
Of Wealth's inglorious gain,
With us who labor for the simpler things,
Awake! Awake! Restrain
Not longer now Freedom's unquiet wings;
Fast breaks the Dawn,—more radiant Morning
her arrow flings.

Sons of the West, Strain of the newer State,
Peons alike with Pride to Pride's false fate,
Shatter your links, arise!
Honor the man who dies
To build the better with his blood and bone.
Strength to the One who flies
The sign of Justice from the People's throne;
Must Right still ever sleep,—Virtue still bleed
alone!

Shall Equity still mock the People's Voice!
The Few, forever rob us of our Choice!
Not while the force of years
Bred from their blood and fears,—
Serfs to that mightier strength the People's
Will,—
Avails our fallen Peers!
What though keen riches now our lands imperil,—
Nothing! A little while,—then Chorals more
splendid still.

What though unanswering Hands still ever move
The shifting of those scenes we know not of!
Though years now ripe and lush,
Unsolved, must ever rush?
Forward and upward moves the Filmy Line!
Brighter still Ages crush
Into our cup, tarnished incarnadine
Stained from the lapse of years,—the richer
ruddier wine.

The Processional

Voice of our Fathers, Memories of the Past;
Strength of our Seed whose covenants did cast
The womb from which we spring,
Vouchsafe to us and bring
New Fealties,—our Land hath need of Thee!
Unrest is on the wing:
Dissatisfaction chides the once born free;
Lights flash, vast murmurs rise, dim ships put
out to sea!

Cross of our Sires—trailing in the dust,
No open slavery upon our necks is thrust
To blot our laboring lands;
But worse,—far cunniger hands
Deride that freedom which our Fathers spoke!
The man who fairly stands
Who fights against the curses of his yoke,
Must render with his sweat or feel the heavier
stroke!

O The ignoble strife of them who stain
Their better birth, for mere material gain!
Full little do they heed
The Misery that they breed;
But gleam undaunted their unrightful food.
O The unworthy seed,—
The smallness of that parasitic brood,
How little do they weigh the world's infinitude!

But see! What Storms are these which to our
 brink,
Darkening our once bright hills and meadows,
 sink
With last dull sickening stroke?
Whence all this blinding smoke
Stifling our Valleys where no birds now sing?
Whence came these waves which broke
Wildly upon our shores; whose waters bring,
Lifting upon its ebb, the bleeding Eagle's wing?

Lo! That poor Emblem by the Slayers shorn
Of once proud strength, now on the Tempest
borne

Falls to a Nation's feet,—

Falls to the City's street,—

Here where men die,—where groan impregnates
groan;

Here where the People greet

Resignedly, these words upon each stone:

“No hope here for the Honest,—the Man who
stands Alone!”

Far down below the storm deep murmurs pass,—

Dim figures crouch about the shriveled grass.

Above the woods and lakes,

Surging, the whirlwind shakes

Its voice upon the trailings of the Night;

Till now bright Morning takes

The bands of blindness from the People's sight;

O The wild Joy of it,—the Light, the coming
Light!

Then rise, arise, sing to the higher strain;
Still do men live who love the open plain!
And let each shepherd's quill
Echo from hill to hill
The joyous tidings of the newer birth.
Reluctant Morning fill,
Flaming, the eastern skies with brighter worth;
Beauty, from the mild stars, flower the awaken-
ing earth!

Come bright Aurora, with thy streaming locks,
Drive the last stars, thy bland celestial flocks.
Scatter the Mimes of Night,—
Bathe with thy quickening light
The symbols of the new florescent sun;
Twice holy raise thy might,
Till all the darkness of thy work is done,
Till Night confesses Day and Day and Night are
one.

Chiefs of our right,—Men of the braver breed,
To song, to song, sing from the worthier creed!
With broadsword scarred and keen
Forward! What lies between
Let it not daunt the temper of our steel.
A Light is on our scene!
Let not the passing shadows more conceal
The glory of that star which coming men shall
 feel.

Let us not heed too much our present stain,
Nor yet too little for our future gain;
But looking to each need,
Boldly we'll strike and seed,
Fearless we'll greet the foe with brand for brand:
Bravely we'll filch each weed
That threatens the pure flowers of our land,
That humble worth may prove at last the steadier
 hand.

Who are these Phillistines, whose hands would
fain
Crush the small flowers of the lowlier plain?
Whose God, Material Fame,
Greater than their false name,
Threatens our once firm faith in Freedom's Free?
Where is that song which came
Borne on the tides of Justice, till the Sea
Drowned the last feeble cry of love-lorn Liberty?

Mightier than kings, they sit upon their thrones,
Fed in mock state by their imperial drones;
And with their hidden scythes—
Bleeding the People's tithes—
Levy vast tribute, with that artful sense
Which through the land's blood writhes
Like some fell serpent, whose sly coilings tense,
Mark as its rightful game the People's innocence.

What phantom shape is this, whose surging form
Lashes to fury the oncoming storm?
What demon of Despair
Wrought from this troubled air
Presses the People with its scourging throng?
Whence are these cries which wear
The Virtuous accents of the trampled throng?
Emancipated once, where now is their joyous
song?

'Tis gone, 'tis gone, stilled by the Night and where
Once stood their faith, another City there
Swarms with an Alien's cry.
Now People live and die
Bound by the sweat they owe their hated peers.
Above, the lurid sky
Mirrors the lust of those whose fane appears
Belching the fires where they mould their un-
rightful years!

Flames upon flames leap to the ruddy skies,
And pinnacles on pinnacles arise
Owned by the sordid few,
Where once bright flowers grew
Now pass they through the gates of utter moan
To greet the Iron Shrew!
And these the words that graved are on each
stone;
“ No hope here for the Honest,—the Man who
stands Alone!

Down to the Sea they pass—a dismal Stream;
Each with a blasted hope, a famished dream.
Crushed in their destiny,
Filched of their liberty,
What hope have they but brightness of that force
Bidding them rise and free
The shackled pinions of each Nation's loss;
Forward the World's Processionals must hold
their course!

Then awake. awake,—strike for the higher mark!
Provoke to keener flame that smouldering spark,
Which like a torch shall spread
Leaping from red to red
Till all the lands are live with burning lights,
If Justice still be bled,
And still each life refused the equal rights;
Nations stir, Kings tremble, soon Dawn shall lead
the Nights!

Stilled by the discord of their idle song,
Yet shall Men rise to right the bitter wrong;
And down the oppressive war,
Urging their righteous car
To stay the storms which o'er our mountains dip.
Led by that stainless star
Born of the lovelier light on Morning's lip,
Splendors more bright shall come to lead our
Laboring Ship.

And that free spirit which they thought to crush,
Will like the gathering of the wind-clouds, rush
With expediting sway
On that now nearing day
When Men, reanimate, shall raze the Trust
Which bleeds their very clay
To those who, in their avaricious lust,
Would play them as mere pawns, mere animated
dust.

Then sing Ye Vales , rise all Ye Worldly Floods!
Give song, give song Ye Mountains and Ye Woods!
See, though last daylight dies
How in High Heaven lies
Radiant, that Star which guides our inspired song.
Rend the abyssal skies,
Give praise, give praise Ye Universal Throng;
And let the nether spheres melodious strains pro-
long!

Earth, Ocean, Air, Stars of descending Night,—
Swift from your viols strike for the coming Light !
Now from the wild wind's wings
Cecilian music flings,—
Deep from the nocturns of the midnight skies
Where the lone swan sings,
Rapturous, its last intoning elegies,—
Empyreal strains more bright than light from
Morning's eyes.

No more, no more the Phantoms of the Night
Shall raise their condor wings in horrid sight ;
But truth in blazing words
Shall drive those hurrying hordes
Like stricken clouds before Autumnal rains.
No more the warring lords
On Liberty, shall battle for their main,
But light, Aureorean Love, shall hold the con-
quered plain.

And all those hosts who cry for gain,
For Gold! For Gold! Till they themselves are
 slain,
And cast upon the rocks
By Greed's gorgonian flocks
Which fly with eager wings on envy bent;
Shall as the light which mocks
Late fading day with ominous portent,
Each pass the Silent Gate and fold their once
 bright tent.

For as the withering leaf, as dust to dust,
So all the shrines of Pride and Mammon must
Pass with those wandering blind
Who rest can never find.
Lo! Where but now they worship at their fires,
Naught but some simple wind
Sweeping at last the melancholy pyres,
Shall mock their Gilded Gods, their Idols and
 their Spires.

Yet from those ashes mightier men shall rise,
And lovelier flowers greet the newer skies.
So let us not forget
The storms that we have met
But forward face with confidence each day!
Then onward with eyes set
Nor heed too much their every little play,
For all their shattered toys like rain must pass
away.

Then courage Chieftains, Champions of the Free,
Raise but again thy Cross of Equity!
And let each shepherd's quill
Echo from hill to hill
The glorious tidings of our natal birth.
Reluctant Morning fill,
Flaming, the eastern skies with brighter worth;
Beauty, from the mild stars flower the awakening
earth.

Come Thou Bright Dawn, rise from thy eastern
streams
With all the beauty of thy host of Dreams;
Come with thy flaming brand,
Come to our thirsting land
Waiting the strains of some Utopian lyre.
Here where our People stand
Shake the white star dust from thy living fires;
Come Thou Quickening Light, revive our lost
desires.

Soft let the airs thy silver lute strings finger,
Light as the winds that on still rose leaves linger;
Still as the shimmering dawn,
Bright as that filmy lawn
Spread by the stars below the holy Seven;
Faint let thy bow be drawn
Over some moments' rainbow arched in Heaven,--
Across the trailing wings of flushed ascendent
Even.

And Israfil beside the stars shall sing,
And Uriel, clear Uriel will fling
High from his Heavenly Throne,
Music, which he alone
Strikes from the sobbing of a star's quick flight;
As past the spheres they moan
Hurling upon high space their sudden light,
A flash, an orient way, darkness and deeper night.

Then rise, arise! Go with that brighter Star,
Look to the abode where the delivered are!
Lo! From invisible wings
A fresher breeze now springs,—
A newer light is in the Mornings' eyes!
Then sing Ye Wanderers sing!
Rend with thy song the barriers of the skies,
Till from thy lyres rush wild sphere dissolving
harmonies.

Forward and upward let your course be shapen;
No Light forgot,—No Mariner forsaken.
And as the Ages change,—
As Worlds on Worlds arrange
New Minions to the play of keener sight,
Fresh powers bright and strange
Shall lift the Watcher to a clearer height;
Each Age the Sunnier Star shall lend each Prose-
lyte.

Sons of our Sons unborn, then shall Ye wave
That fallen standard which our Fathers gave.
Born to a better fight—
Bred to a brighter light—
Build us a City from thy sweat and bone.
That this be the pledge Ye write,—
And these the words Ye grave upon each stone:
“ALL HOPE HERE FOR THE HONEST,—
THE MAN WHO STANDS ALONE!”

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